

District of Columbia Department of Health

For Immediate Release
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Hospital Alert #3 ***National Terror Threat Raised***

NEW U.S. STATUS: ORANGE

Earlier today—Friday, February 07, 2003—Attorney General John Ashcroft, and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge raised the national terrorism threat level from an ***elevated*** risk (*Yellow*) of terrorist attacks to a ***high*** risk (*Orange*). Orange is the second highest of the five threat assessment levels on the scale developed by the Homeland Security Department. Under an orange alert, local officials are urged to take additional precautions at public events, restrict access to key facilities to essential personnel, and prepare to move or disperse elements of the workforce.

The D.C. Department of Health emphasizes the need for all hospitals to assess their preparedness protocols.

DOH strongly recommend that local hospitals:

- Increase surveillance and conduct routine checks by full-time staff;
- Review surveillance, security, disaster, emergency communications and mass casualty plans to ensure their accuracy;
- Conduct communication drills with designated emergency response systems, and command locations;
- Report all suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities;
- Inventory all supplies and emergency equipment;
- Update emergency rosters and contact lists with 24/7 numbers;
- Identify and limit use of key entries to hospitals;
- Brief all hospital personnel of the recent heightened terror alert.

As always, the D.C. Department of Health is available to assist local hospitals with their emergency needs. If you require additional information, please visit our bioterrorism website at www.bioterrorism.dc.gov for emergency health fact sheets, alerts and press releases, and other valuable resources.

Editor's Note—Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

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